

210050 LK BAK7: Comparative Political Analysis

Instructor: Ida Hjerimitslev, PhD

Thursdays 08:00-09:30 online

Overview

This course is intended for bachelor level students and serves as an introduction to concepts, theories, and methods employed in the subfield comparative politics. Over the 14 weeks of this course, we will cover a wide range of topics incl. the comparative method, regime types, and democratic institutions.

The goal is to give you a broad overview of the subfield and prepare you take other political science courses with a more narrow focus in the near future. Given that it is impossible to fully appreciate this vast literature in a single course, many of the assigned readings will be textbook chapters. However, the syllabus also contains a few classics and a number of more recent examples of high-quality empirical research articles. We will devote substantial time and effort in class to go through these in detail.

Prerequisites and language

This course is intended for bachelor level students and there are no prerequisites. Regular attendance in class (maximum 2 classes can be missed, the first class is mandatory) is expected. The seminar is held in English. This includes all kinds of communication (e.g. email, Moodle, assignments etc). English may not be your first language, and you will probably make mistakes. That is perfectly okay! I will not be judging your language skills, but rather the quality of your ideas and arguments. However, be aware that the readings can be challenging so I do recommend a decent level of literacy in English.

Learning objectives

- Students are familiar with the most prominent approaches and arguments in the comparative politics literature.
- Students can situate their own (future) research questions within the existing literature.
- Students can critically evaluate strengths and weaknesses of theoretical arguments.
- Students can conduct basic comparative analysis using empirical data.
- Students can communicate theories and findings in a concise academic language.

Course organization

All instruction is online. Class will take place on Thursday 8:00-9:30 in BigBlueButton (link via Moodle). Please acquire the textbook that we are reading from: Caramani, Daniele (2020) *Comparative Politics*. 5th edition. All other course material will be available on Moodle. **Please upload all assignments on Moodle as PDF's on time**

Course assessment

The final assessment will be based on the following components:

- Active participation incl. discussion forum posts (15% of final grade)
- Three homework assignments (25% of final grade) based on materials in the course texts. Students are encouraged to form study groups.
- A mid-term paper before Christmas (30% of final grade).
- Final paper (30% of final grade).

All components are strictly mandatory You must complete each of the four components in order to earn a positive grade. The final grade will be the weighted average of the four graded component. You are not required to get a passing grade on each component, **but you are required to submit an honest attempt**. The final grade is primarily based on the two written assignments. However, I strongly encourage active participation throughout the semester since this is the best and most efficient way of mastering the material.

- 87-100 = 1 (Excellent)
- 75-86 = 2 (Good)
- 63-74 = 3 (Satisfactory)
- 50-62 = 4 (Sufficient)
- <50 = 5 (Fail)

Active participation (10%)

You should be on time and stay for the entire session. **You are allowed to miss a maximum of two class**, any absence beyond that will result in a failing grade. I will take note of your presence online. Students are expected to engage actively in class room discussion. Students are expected to read all assigned material carefully prior to class each week. Students are expected to be able to account for the main theoretical arguments and ongoing debates surrounding the topic of the week. As preparation for class, **you are required to submit at least one question to the course website 24 hours ahead of class every week** excl. the first and the last class. Again, **you are allowed to miss a maximum of two questions** - anything more than that and you will fail the class.

Three homework assignments (25%)

Three times during the semester you will receive a homework assignment. The assignments will require you to write short answers to questions about the topics covered in class. Each assignment should be no longer than 1000 words and you will have one week to complete it.

Mid-term paper (30%)

On December 16th you will receive the prompts for your mid-term paper. You will be asked to answer a specific research question using the comparative method, empirical data and the theories covered in the readings. Mid-term papers are **due at midnight on December 22nd**. Plagiarism will be assessed with the Turnitin software and will not be tolerated

Final paper (30%)

On January 27th you will receive the prompts for your final paper. The format will be similar to the mid-term paper. Final papers are **due at midnight on February 10th 2022** i.e. three weeks after the last class. Plagiarism will be assessed with the Turnitin software and will not be tolerated.

Weekly Readings

October 7th: Introduction (why?)

- Rothstein, Bo (2020). The relevance of comparative politics, in Daniele Caramani (Eds.), *Comparative Politics*. Oxford: Oxford University Press. 1-34 (Chapter 1)

October 14th: Conceptualization and Institutionalism (what?)

- Caramani, Daniele (2020). Introduction to comparative politics, in Daniele Caramani (Eds.), *Comparative Politics*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Hall, P. A., and Taylor, R. C. (1996). “Political science and the three new institutionalisms.” *Political studies*, 44(5), 936-957.

October 21st: The Comparative Method (how?)

- Pennings, Paul and Hans Keman (2020). Comparative research methods, in Daniele Caramani (Eds.), *Comparative Politics*. Oxford: Oxford University Press. 50-66 (Chapter 3)
- King, G., Keohane, R. O., and Verba, S. (1994). *Designing social inquiry*. Princeton university press. 3-33

October 28th: Democratic Systems

- Pérez-Liñán, Aníbal (2020). Democracies, in Daniele Caramani (Eds.), *Comparative Politics*. Oxford: Oxford University Press. 86-102 (Chapter 5)
- Lijphart, A. (1999). *Patterns of democracy: Government forms and performance in thirty-six democracies*. Yale university press. 1-45

November 4th: Authoritarian Regimes

- Lindstadt, Natasha (2020). Authoritarian regimes, in Daniele Caramani (Eds.), *Comparative Politics*. Oxford: Oxford University Press. 103-116 (Chapter 6)

- Gandhi, J., and Przeworski, A. (2007). “Authoritarian institutions and the survival of autocrats.” *Comparative political studies*, 40(11), 1279-1301.

First homework is due at midnight on November 10th

November 11th: Electoral Systems

- Gallagher, Michael (2020). Elections and Referendums, in Daniele Caramani (Eds.), *Comparative Politics*. Oxford: Oxford University Press. 178-192 (Chapter 10)
- Iversen, T., and Soskice, D. (2006). “Electoral institutions and the politics of coalitions: Why some democracies redistribute more than others.” *American political science review*, 100(2), 165-181.

November 18th: Party Systems

- Caramani, Daniele (2020). Party systems, in Daniele Caramani (Eds.), *Comparative Politics*. Oxford: Oxford University Press. 231-251 (Chapter 13)
- Dalton, R. J. (2008). “The quantity and the quality of party systems: Party system polarization, its measurement, and its consequences.” *Comparative Political Studies*, 41(7), 899-920.

November 25th: Electoral Behavior and Participation

- Kitschelt, Herbert and Philipp Rehm (2020). Political Participation, in Daniele Caramani (Eds.), *Comparative Politics*. Oxford: Oxford University Press. 318-335 (Chapter 18)
- Powell, G. B. (1986). American voter turnout in comparative perspective. *American Political Science Review*, 80(1), 17-43.

December 2nd: The Legislature

- Kreppel, Amie (2020). Legislatures, in Daniele Caramani (Eds.), *Comparative Politics*. Oxford: Oxford University Press. 117-138 (Chapter 7)

- Martin, L. W., and Vanberg, G. (2004). “Policing the bargain: Coalition government and parliamentary scrutiny”. *American Journal of Political Science*, 48(1), 13-27.

Second homework is due at midnight on December 8th

December 9th: The Executive

- Müller, Wolfgang C. (2020). ‘Governments and bureaucracies’, in Daniele Caramani (Eds.), *Comparative Politics*. Oxford: Oxford University Press. 139-158 (Chapter 8)
- Bäck, H., Debus, M., and Dumont, P. (2011). Who gets what in coalition governments? Predictors of portfolio allocation in parliamentary democracies. *European Journal of Political Research*, 50(4), 441-478.

December 16th: The Judiciary

- Stone Sweet, Alec (2020). Constitutions, rights and judicial power, in Daniele Caramani (Eds.), *Comparative Politics*. Oxford: Oxford University Press. 159-176 (Chapter 9)
- Gibson, J. L., Caldeira, G. A., and Baird, V. A. (1998). On the legitimacy of national high courts. *American Political Science Review*, 92(2), 343-358.

Mid-term paper is due at midnight on December 22nd

January 13th: Multilevel Governance and Supra-national Institutions

- Hooghe, Liesbet, Gary Marks, and Arjan Schakel (2020). Multilevel governance, in Daniele Caramani (Eds.), *Comparative Politics*. Oxford: Oxford University Press. 194-210 (Chapter 11)
- Hix, S., and Marsh, M. (2007). Punishment or protest? Understanding European parliament elections. *The journal of politics*, 69(2), 495-510.

January 20th: Democratic Backsliding

- Burnell, Peter (2020). From supporting democracy to supporting autocracy, in Daniele Caramani (Eds.), *Comparative Politics*. Oxford: Oxford University Press. 455-472 (Chapter

25)

- Waldner, D., and Lust, E. (2018). Unwelcome change: Coming to terms with democratic backsliding. *Annual Review of Political Science*, 21, 93-113.

Third homework is due at midnight on January 26th

January 27th: Q&A

Final paper is due at midnight on February 10th